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HARVARD
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THE SKELETON
OF
CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES:

AN ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH

THE SEVERAL FRAGMENTS OF THE WORK
AS LEFT BY THE AUTHOR.

BY

HENRY BRADSHAW,

LIBRARIAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

London and Cambridge:
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1868.

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2



THE following sheets have been printed solely for purposes of collation. Having found between fifty and sixty copies of the Canterbury Tales, and having further noticed that very few of them have the contents in the same order, I have been able, after a minute examination of a good number, so far to break the work up into what I have been led to believe were the fragments as left by the author, that it is now comparatively easy to describe, on finding any particular manuscript, in what order or disorder the contents are placed. Further than this, I have found it possible to say in very many cases what order any manuscript gives evidence of, however great the disorder may seem to be at first sight.

The great majority of manuscripts may be ranged in three classes, which have such clear characteristics that any one, on taking a book into his hand, could readily distinguish to which class his book belongs. Having advanced so far, it struck me at once that by putting down on paper the beginnings and endings of the divisions and subdivisions of the fragments to which I had reduced the work; and by adding to this any lines or passages in which there was either much known discrepancy in reading, or else some matter which bore upon the general action of the story (such as mention of time of day, place, neighbourhood, &c.), I might then print fifty or sixty copies of this, and use one copy for writing in a collation of each known manuscript, so as to shew its peculiarities. I had no doubt that manuscripts of the same family in matter of arrangement would also contain for the most part readings of the same family in the text; and it would be a short way of classifying all the known manuscripts for the use of any future editor of the Canterbury Tales. To each Fragment I have prefixed a note to say in what varieties of state the different portions are more generally found, so as to be a ready guide when any manuscript is actually under examination.

It is evident from this statement that my purpose in printing these sheets is purely temporary; but it has struck

me that by printing a few more copies than were necessary for my immediate object, and circulating them among those who take an interest in the textual criticism of our early literature, and especially of Chaucer, they might see how very far we are as yet from the possibility of a satisfactory edition of Chaucer, and how much it lies in any scholar's power to lend a helping hand.

The three classes into which the manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* may be readily distinguished are as follows :

1. This is the least correct*. In Frag. I. the story of Gamelyn is found. In Frag. II. the link at the end is retained and made generally to introduce the Squyere. In Frag. IV. the concluding stanza of the tale (beginning: 'For which here for the wyves love of Bathe') is not found at all; in the song immediately following, the last three stanzas are transposed so as to end: 'y ȝow counseyle'; and the link-stanza at the end ('This worthy clerk,' &c.) is not found at all. In Frag. V. the introductory link is wanting, and the link at the end is perverted so as to apply (generally) to the Frankeleyn. In Frag. VI. the link at the end is perverted so as to introduce the Merchaunt. In Frag. VIII. the link at the end is found. In Frag. IX. the spurious link introducing the Shipman is found at the end. In Frag. X. the Monk's tale contains the modern instances (Peter of Spain, Peter of Cyprus, Bernabo Visconti and Ugolino) between Zenobia and Nero; and the link is retained at the end of the tale of the Nonnes Prest.

* In the editions of 1532—1721 a text of this class forms the basis, as is shown by the facts that the stanzas in the song at the end of the Clerk's tale are in the wrong order, and that the modern instances in the Monk's tale are in the middle; but the original editor, William Thynne, added to this any additional matter which he thought worthy of insertion from manuscripts of another class, without regard to the confusion which he was thereby creating—a species of confusion which is never found in the manuscripts. This is easily seen by tabulating the contents of one of the early editions according to the system I have adopted. Tyrwhitt saw the confusion caused by this process, and rectified it from the manuscripts; but nothing short of reducing all that remains of the work to its constituent parts and testing these by the actual evidence of manuscripts will enable us to trace out the ground and origin of all the disarrangements so as to prepare the way for a better settlement of the text.

2. This seems the most authentic, if I may use the term, and is that of the MS. used by Mr Tho. Wright, Mr Robert Bell and Mr Morris. In Frag. I. Gamelyn is retained. In Frag. II. the link at the end is generally retained though useless. In Frag. IV. the concluding stanza (For which here, &c.) is found; the last three stanzas of the song are in right order; but the link stanza is wanting. In Frag. V. the introductory link is in its place, and the link at the end is correct, introducing the Squyere. In Frag. VI. the link at the end is correct, introducing the Frankeleyn. Frag. VIII. occurs in its right place, and sometimes has, sometimes has not, the link at the end. Frag. IX. is without the spurious link at the end introducing the Shipman. In Frag. X. the modern instances in the Monk's tale are in the middle; and the link at the end of the Nonnes Prest's tale is sometimes found and sometimes not.

3. This is the order adopted by Tyrwhitt from several MSS. It agrees in the main with No. 2, but the alterations seem to be all the result of some editorial supervision exercised after Chaucer's death, and in most cases the reason for the change is easily ascertained. In Frag. I. Gamelyn is suppressed. In Frag. II. the end-link is suppressed. In Frag. IV. the concluding stanza is in its place (For which here, &c.); the last three stanzas of the song are in right order (ending: 'wringe and wayle'); and the link-stanza at the end generally occurs. In Frag. V. the introductory and concluding links are correct. In Frag. VI. the concluding link is correct. Frag. VIII. is moved to between X. and XI. and the link at the end is suppressed. Frag. IX. is without the spurious link at the end. In Frag. X. the modern instances in the Monk's tale are removed to the end of the tale; and the link at the end of the Nonnes Prest's tale is sometimes suppressed, and sometimes found and applied so as to introduce the Nonne.

Various attempts have been made to bring the tales into order of time and place. This however seems now an impossibility. The test passages are few and simple, though some of them have hitherto been overlooked. In Frag. I. (in the link between the Millere and the Reve) they are by Depeford and it is halfway pryme; (the reading *passed pryme* appears

to mean much the same). In Frag. VI. the Squyere will not tarry them 'for it is pryme.' In Frag. II. at the beginning 'it was ten of the klok'. In Frag. X. they are by Rochester (just before the Monk's tale). In Frag. III. (near the beginning) they are some little way short of Sittingbourne, and at the end they are 'almost at town', apparently some stopping place, but what is not indicated. In Frag. IV. the words of the Clerk seem to allude to the Wyf's tale. In Frag. V. there is a clear allusion to the Wyf's tale as already told. In Frag. VIII. the Chanon's ȝeman saw them ride out of their hostelry '*now* in the morwe tyde' and they were then at Boughton under Blee. In Frag. XI. they are at Bob-up-and-down under the Blee (whether Boughton or Harbledown is an equal difficulty), and the Hoste reproaches the Cook with being asleep 'by the morwe', and it is clearly morning from the other circumstances. In Frag. XII. at the beginning it was four in the afternoon and they were near Canterbury. Did the pilgrims sleep on the way? Do the Somnour's concluding words point to the place where they broke the journey? There are difficulties enough for the most patient investigator if he chooses to try and solve them.

At present this statement is only provisional, but it will serve as a fair guide until the collations are more fully completed. The tests of Fragments IV. V. and VI. are the simplest, especially IV. (the Clerk's tale).

I will only add that the present sheets contain a first attempt at *orthography*. Without orthography it is impossible to teach or to gain a really accurate knowledge of a language. By a minute and careful study of the rhyme, I am convinced that it is possible to see how Chaucer pronounced many thousand words, or at least, what sets of words he pronounced in the same way; and if starting from that knowledge we proceed to the investigation (in etymology, &c.) of the cause of that agreement we shall get to some sound basis of grammatical knowledge. We all know that to spell correctly requires that our eyes and the eyes of the people with whom we live should be educated by constant reading in a way that no fourteenth century scribe's eyes could possibly

be. As many of us are at work now at this very point, it is needless to say more on this head in this place, except that what is printed of Chaucer's here is the result of my present knowledge on the subject, and that I shall be most grateful to any one who will point out what is wrong and why it is so, that we may gradually gain some substantial knowledge which can be taught and applied.

HENRY BRADSHAW.

CAMBRIDGE,
8 *September* 1867.

A TABLE OF THE TWELVE FRAGMENTS OF THE CANTERBURY TALES

REFERRED TO IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

FR. I.

1. General Prologue.
2. The Knyght.
3. Link.
4. The Millere.
5. Link.
6. The Reve.
7. Link.
8. The Cook.
* * *
9. Gamelyn.
* * *

FR. II.

- * * *
1. Prologue.
2. The Man of lawe.
3. Link.
* * *

FR. III.

- * * *
1. Link.
2. The Wyf of Bathe.
3. Link.
4. The Frere.
5. Link.
6. The Somnour.
* * *

FR. IV.

- * * *
1. Prologue.
2. The Clerk.
3. Link.
* * *

FR. V.

1. Link.
2. The Merchaunt.
3. Link.

FR. VI.

- * * *
1. The Squyere.
* * *
2. Link.

FR. VII.

- * * *
1. The Frankeleyn.
* * *

FR. VIII.

- * * *
1. The Secounde Nonne.
2. The Chanouns ȝeman.
* * *

FR. IX.

- * * *
1. The Doctour of Phisyk.
2. The Pardonere.
* * *

FR. X.

- * * *
1. The Shipman.
2. Link.
3. The Prioresse.
4. Link.
5. Chaucer's Sire Thopace.
6. Link.
7. Chaucer's Melibee.
8. Link.
9. The Monk.
10. Link.
11. The Nonnes Preest.
12. Link.
* * *

FR. XI.

- * * *
1. Prologue.
2. The Maunciple.
* * *

FR. XII.

- * * *
1. Link.
2. The Person.

in Chaucer. It is in anybody's power to render a good service to students of early English by investigating these questions. The words which occur in rhyme are of course the only forms which are of any use for this purpose.

1. General Prologue, beginning (line 1):

*Here beginneth the prolog of the Canterburie Tales
compyled by Geffrey Chaucer.*

WHAN that Aprille with his shoures swote
The drought of March hath perced to the rote
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour
Whan Zephirus eke with his swote breth
Enspired hath in every holt and heth
The tendre croppes and the 3onge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours ironne

lines 19—27:

Befel that in that sesoun on a day
In Southwerk at the Tabard as y lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterburie with ful devout corage
At nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaynye
Of sondry folk by aventure ifalle
In felawshipe and pilgrymes were they alle
That toward Canterburie wolde ryde.

line 43:

A Knyght¹ ther was and that a worthy man

line 79:

With him ther was his sone a 3ong Squyere²

line 101:

A 3eman³ hadde he and servauntes no mo

line 118:

Ther was also a Nonne a Prioress⁴

lines 163—165

Another Nonne⁵ with hire had she †certeyn
And eke a Prest⁶† that was here chapelleyne.
A Monk⁷ ther was a fayr for the maystrye

line 208 :

A Frere⁸ ther was a wanton and a merie

line 270 :

A Merchaunt⁹ was ther with a forked berd

line 285 :

A Clerk¹⁰ ther was of Oxenforde also

line 309 :

A Serjaunt¹¹ of the lawe war and wys

line 331 :

A Frankeleyn¹² was in his compaynye

lines 361—363 :

An Haberdasshere¹³ and a Carpenter¹⁴
A Webbe¹⁵ a Dyere¹⁶ and a Tapisere¹⁷
Were with us eke clothed in o liveree

line 379 :

A Cook¹⁸ they hadde with hem for the nones

line 388 :

A Shipman¹⁹ was ther woninge fer by weste

line 411 :

Ther was also a Doctour of phisyk²⁰

line 445 :

A good Wyf²¹ was ther of besyde Bathe

† This emendation is my own. It is quite in the style of the copyists' emendations, where the links intended to introduce one speaker are perverted so as to introduce another; but Tyrwhitt's explanation seems the best, that a passage was probably cut out at this point, and that the text was carelessly patched by some one else, so as to render the lines almost nonsense.

lines 477, 478 :

A good man was ther of religioun
And was a poore Person²⁵ of a toun

line 529:

With him ther was a Ploughman²⁶ that was his brother

lines 542—544 :

Ther was also a Reeve²⁶ and a Millere²⁶
A Sompnour²⁶ and a Pardonere²⁷ also
A Maunciple²⁸ and myself²⁹ ther was no mo.

lines 792—797 :

This is the poynt to speke it plat and pleyne
That eche of 3ow to shorten with 3oure weye
In this vyage shal telle tales tweye
To Canterburie ward y mene it so
And homward he shal tellen othere two
Of adventures that whylom han befall.

lines 824—833 :

A morwe whan the day began to springe
Up ros oure Hoste and was oure aller cok
And gadered us togeder in a flok
And forth we ryde a litel more than pas
Unto the watering of seynt Thomas
And there oure Hoste began his hors areste
And seyde Lordes herkeneth if 3ow leste
3e wite oure forward and y it recorde
If even song and morwe song acorde
Let see now who shal telle first a tale.

The Prologue ends thus (lines 858—860) :

And with that word we ryde forth oure weye
And he began with ryght a merie chere
His tale anon and seyde as 3e shule here.

Here endeth the prolog.

2. The Knyght, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Knyghtes tale.

WHYLC

us

lines 34, 35 :

There as y lafte y wil azeyn beginne.
THIS duk of whom y made mencion

ending (line 2250) :

And God save al this fayre compaynye.
Here endeth the Knyghtes tale.

3. **Link**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Milleres prolog.

WHAN that the Knyght had thus his tale itold

ending (line 76) :

And ek men shule not make ernest of game.
Here endeth the Milleres prolog.

4. **The Millere**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Milleres tale.

WHYLOM there was dwellinge in Oxenforde

ending (line 666) :

This tale is don and God save al the rowte.
Here endeth the Milleres tale.

5. **Link**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Reeves prolog.

WHAN folk had loughen of this nyce cas

lines 51—54 :

Seye forth thy tale and tarie not the tyme
Lo Depeford and it is half way pryme
Lo Grenewich there many a shrewe is inne
It were al tyme thy tale to beginne.

ending (line 66) :

But in his owene he can not seen a balk.
Here endeth the Reeves prolog.

6. The Reeve, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Reeves tale.

AT Trompingtoun not fer fro Cantebrigge
ending (line 404) :

Thus have y quit the millere in my tale.

Here endeth the Reeves tale.

7. Link, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Cookes prolog.

THE Cook of London whyl the Reeve spak
ending (line 40) :

And seyde his tale as 3e shule after here.

Here endeth the Cookes prolog.

8. The Cook, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Cookes tale.

A PRENTIS whylom dwelte in oure citee
ending (line 58) :

A shoppe and swyved for hire sustenaunce.

* * * * *

9. Gamelyn, beginning (line 1) :

Lytheth and listneth and herkeneth aryght
ending (line 902) :

God bringe us to the joye that evere shal be.
Amen.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT II.

- * * 1. Prologue.—2. The MAN OF LAWES Tale of Constaunce.—
3. Link. * * *

THIS fragment is found in two states. In its earlier state it has at the end twenty-eight lines forming a link to introduce another tale, apparently that of the Squyere. As the work went on Chaucer seems to have given a character to the Squyere not quite in harmony with the description here given, and so in the later stage of the work this link is cancelled. The critics have unfortunately looked upon Chaucer's great work as simply a collection of twenty-four tales each preceded by a prologue introducing the next narrator. Until this notion is thoroughly uprooted, the poem must remain an inextricable mass of confusion. On the other hand as soon as we perceive that the author composed the work piece-meal with the intention of finally working all his pieces into one harmonious whole, this confusion disappears. Every one allows that this finishing process was never reached by the author, so that it remains for us to make the best of the several fragments as they have come down to us. We must look upon these fragments as so many portions of the story of the Canterbury pilgrimage into which the tales are introduced; the so-called prologues then become the main line of the action of the poem; and in each fragment we shall see that the story is taken up at one point and dropped at another without a clear reference to what has gone before or what is to follow. For instance, in this which I have called the second fragment, the beginning contains no allusion whatever to the previous tales, and, so far, it matters not what place it should hold in the collection. Before telling his tale,

the Man of lawe says: 'Y can ryght now no *thrifty* tale seyn;' and as soon as it is finished the Host says: 'This was a *thrifty* tale for the nones.' He soon after calls out: 'O Jankin be ȝe there?' Jankin is the name of the squyere in the Somnour's tale: 'Now stood the lordes squyere at the borde That carf his mete', &c., which reminds us of the description in the General Prologue of the Squyere who 'carf before his fader at the table.' The character of the pilgrim who now comes forward and offers to tell a tale accords well in many points with the Squyere, but if the word in line 17 after 'Seyde the' be omitted, there is nothing in the context which necessarily makes this portion of the story an introduction to any one known tale in particular. In one manuscript, where the pieces are so arranged that this second fragment finds itself immediately before Fragment X. (which begins with the *Shipman's* tale), the scribe has made the words run 'Seyde the *Shipman*'...and this has led Tyrwhitt and all more recent editors to sever these lines from the Man of lawe's tale, to which they inherently belong, and to prefix them to the Shipman's tale, the editors having always looked upon it as their first duty to provide a prologue for each tale at whatever cost. In a large number of manuscripts, however, the words are written 'Seyde the Squyere....' and there can be little doubt that, as originally written, it was Chaucer's intention to add at this point a tale to be told by the Squyere. Nevertheless it is clear that the Squyere's 'tale half-told' which we now have was not written as part of this fragment, because before the Man of lawe's tale the fourth part of the day was gone, while the Squyere at the beginning of his tale says 'Y wil not tarien ȝow for it is pryme,' and such discrepancies of time and place are never to be found in different parts of the same fragment.

* * * * *

1. Prologue, beginning (line 1):

f

was prolog.

OURE Hoste sey wel that the bryghte sonne
 The ark of his artificial day had ronne
 The ferthe part and half an houre and more
 And though he were not depe expert in lore
 He wiste it was the eyght and twenty day
 Of April that is messagere to May
 And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree
 Was as in lengthe of the same quantitee
 That was the body erect that caused it
 And therfore by the shadwe he took his wit 10
 That Phebus which that shon so clere and bryghte
 Degrees was fyve and forty clombe on hyghte
 And for that day as in that latitude
 It was ten of the klok he gan conclude
 And sodeynly he plyghte his hors abowte
 Lordinges quod he y warne þow al this rowte
 The ferthe partye of this day is gon 17

lines 46—76 :

Y can ryght now no thrifty tale seyn
 But Chaucer though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on ryming craftily
 Hath seyde hem in swich English as he can
 Of olde tyme as knoweth many a man 50
 And if he have not seyde hem leve brother
 In o book he hath seyde hem in another
 For he hath told of loveres up and down
 Mo than Ovyde made of mencion
 In his Epistolis that ben ful olde
 What shulde I tellen hem sin they be tolde
 In þowthe he made of Ceys and Alcion
 And sithen hath he spoke of everich on
 Thes noble wyves and thes loveres eke
 Who so that wil his large volume seke 60
 Cleped the Seyntes Legende of Cupyde
 There may he see the large woundes wyde
 Of Lucesse and of Babiloun Thisbee
 The swerd of Dydo for the false Enee

The tree of Phillis for hire Demophoun
 The pleynt of Deyanyre and Hermioun
 Of Adriane and of Ysiphilee
 The bareyne yle standinge in the see
 The dreynt Leandere for his fayre Hero
 The teres of Eleyne and eke the wo 70
 Of Briseyda and of Lademia
 The creweltee of thee quene Medea
 Thy litel children hanginge by the hals
 For thy Jason that was of love so fals
 O Ypermestre Penelope Alceste
 3oure wyfhood he commendeth with the beste. 76

ending (line 98):

Began his tale and seyde as 3e shule here.

Here endeth the Man of Lawes prolog.

2. The Man of Lawe, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Man of Lawes tale.

O HATEFUL harm condicioun of poverté
 lines 35, 36:

Me taughte a tale, which that 3e shule here.

IN Surrie whylom dwelte a compaynye
 ending (line 1064):

And kepe us alle that ben in this place.

Here endeth the Man of Lawes tale.

3. Link, as follows:

Here beginneth the [] prolog.

OURE Hoste upon his stirop stood anon
 And seyde Goode men herkeneth everich on
 This was a thrifty tale for the nones
 Sire parish prèst quod he for Goddes bones
 Telle us a tale as was thy forward 3ore
 Y see wel that 3e lerned men in lore

Conne mochel good by Goddes dignitee
 The Person him answerde Benedicite
 What eyleth the man so sinfully to swere
 Oure Hoste answerde O Jankin be 3e there 10
 Y smelle a lollere in the wynd quod he
 Now goode men quod oure Hoste herkeneth to me
 Abideth for Goddes digne passioun
 For we shule have a predicacioun
 This lollere here wil prechen us somewhat.
 Nay by my fader soule that shal he not
 Seyde the [] that shal he not preche
 He shal no gospel here glose ne teche
 We leven alle in the grete God quod he
 He wolde sowen some difficultee 20
 Or springen cokkel in oure clene corn
 And therfor Hoste y warne thee befor
 My joly body shal a tale telle
 And y shal clinken 3ow so mērie a belle
 That y shal waken al this compaynye
 But it shal not ben of philosophye
 Ne of phisyk ne termes queynte of lawe
 There is but litel latin in my mawe. 28

Here endeth the [] prolog.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT III.

* * * 1. The WIFE OF BATH'S Prologue.—2. The WIFE'S Tale of "What women most desire."—3. Link.—4. The FRERE'S Tale of the Somnour and the Devil.—5. Link.—6. The SOMNOUR'S Tale of the Frere and the bedridden man.— * * *

THE allusion to 'wo that is in mariage' is so constant in Chaucer's works that there is no tale to which this opening can be said pointedly to allude. The tales of the Clerk, the Merchant, the Franklin, or the Manciple would any of them do to precede—at the same time there is no necessary connexion with any one known tale. The Somnour's remark that he will telle tales two or three of freres or he come to Sidenborne, and his last words: 'My tale is don we ben almost at toun,' would lead me to believe that Chaucer intended this fragment to find its final place in a later portion of the poem, between Fragment X. in which allusion is made to *Rochester*, and Fragment IX. where *Boughton under Blee* is mentioned. In any case the fragment beginning with the Wife's Prologue and ending with the Somnour's tale must be kept unbroken in itself.

* * * * *

1. Prologue, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Wyf of Bathes prolog.

EXPERIENCE though no ~~the~~ **the**
 Were in this ***** for me
 To speke

lines 846, 847 :

But if y telle tales two or three
Of freres or y come to Sidenborne

ending (line 856) :

3is dame quod he telle forth and y shal here.

Here endeth the Wyf of Bathes prolog.

2. The Wyf of Bathe, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Wyf of Bathes tale.

IN olde dayes of the kinge Arthour

ending (line 408) :

God sende hem soon verray pestilence.

Here endeth the Wyf of Bathes tale.

3. Link, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Freres prolog.

THIS worthy limitour this noble Frere

ending (line 36) :

Telle forth 3oure tale my leve maister dere.

Here endeth the Freres prolog.

4. The Frere, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Freres tale.

WHYLOM there was dwellinge in my contree

ending (line 364) :

Of his misdede er that the feend him hente.

Here endeth the Freres tale.

5. Link, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Somnoures prolog.

THIS Somnour in his stirop up he stood

ending (line 44) :

My prolog wil y ende in this manere.

Here endeth the Somnoures prolog.

6. The Somnour, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Somnours tale.

LORDINGES there is in Engeland y gesse

lines 535, 536:

Now stood the lordes squyere at the borde
That carf his mete and herde word by worde

ending (lines 585, 586):

And Jankin hath iwonne a newe gowne
My tale is don we ben almost at towne.

Here endeth the Somnours tale.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT IV.

- * * * 1. Prologue.—2. The CLERK OF OXFORD'S Tale of Grisilde.—
3. Link. * * *

THERE are three things to be noticed in examining manuscripts which contain this fragment. 1. At the end of the tale just before the Song 'Grisilde is ded &c.' one set of copies ends with Stanza CLIX.: 'It wolde rathere breste atwo than plye,' and another set adds Stanza CLX., beginning: 'For which here for the wyves love of Bathe.' 2. In the song itself, the one set of copies has the last three stanzas in this order: IV. If thou be fayr... v. Ne drede him not... VI. 3e archewyves...; the other set has these stanzas arranged as I have printed them, so that the last words of the song are: 'And let him care and wepe and wringe and wayle.' 3. In one set of copies the single link-stanza is subjoined to the song: 'This worthy clerk whan ended was his tale,' in the other set it is omitted. It is curious that this last stanza is not found (so far as I have examined) except in those copies where the Clerk's and Merchant's tales are connected; in other words, except precisely where it is not required. About the song I will only remark that by the present arrangement the first four stanzas are in the plural and the last two in the singular, whereas the other order produces confusion in this point.

* * * * *

1. Prologue, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Clerkes prolog.

SIRE Clerk of Oxenforde oure hoste seyde

ending (line 56):

But this is the tale which that ȝe shule here.

Here endeth the Clerkes prolog.

2. The Clerk of Oxenforde, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Clerkes tale.

THERE is ryght at the west syde of Itayle

line 141:

Pars secunda.

NOT fer from thilke paleys honourable

line 393:

Pars tercia.

THER fel as it befalleth tymes mo

line 554:

Pars quarta.

IN this estat ther passed ben four ȝere

line 729:

Pars quinta.

AMONG al this after his wikke usage

line 883:

Pars sexta.

FROM Boloynes is this erl of Panik come

ending (lines 1106—1156):

Let us than live in vertuous suffraunce.

1106

CLIX.

But on word lordinges herkeneth er y go

It were ful hard to fynde now on dayes

In al a town Grisildes three or two

For if that they were putte to swiche assayes

The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes

With bras that though the coyn be fayr at ye

It wolde rathere breste atwo than plye

1113

CLX.

For which here for the wyves love of Bathe
 Whos lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
 In hy maystrye and elles were it skathe
 Y wil with lusty herte fresshe and grene
 Sey 3ow a song to glade 3ow y wene
 And let us stinte of earnestful matere
 Herkeneth my song that seyth in this manere. 1120

SONG.

I.

GRISILDE is ded and eke hire pacience
 And bothe at ones iburied in Itayle
 For which y crye in opene audience
 No wedded man so hardy be to assayle
 His wyves pacience in trost to fynde
 Grisildis for in certeyn he shal fayle. 1126

II.

O noble wyves ful of hy prudence
 Let non humilitee 3oure tonge nayle
 Ne let no clerk han cause or diligence
 To wryte of 3ow a storie of swich mervayle
 As of Grisildis pacient and kynde
 Lest Chichevache 3ow swolwe in hire entrayle. 1132

III.

Folweth Ekko that holdeth no silence
 But evere answereth at the countretayle
 Beth not bedaffed for 3oure innocence
 But sharply taketh on 3ow the governayle
 Emprinteth wel this lessoun in 3oure mynde
 For comune profit sith it may avayle. 1138

IV. (VI.)

3e archewyves stondeth at 3oure defence
 Sin 3e ben stronge as is a gret camayle
 Ne suffereth not that men 3ow do offence
 And sklendre wyves feble as in batayle
 Beth egre as is a tygre 3ond in Ynde
 Ay clappeth as a mille y 3ow counsayle. 1144

V.

Ne drede him not do him no reverence
 For though thyn husbond armed be in mayle
 The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
 Shule perce his brest and eke his aventayle
 In jelousye y rede ek thou him bynde
 And thou shalt make him couche as doth a quayle. 1150

VI. (IV.)

If thou be fayr there folk ben in presence
 Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparayle
 If thou be foul be free of thy dispence
 To gete thee frendes ay do thy travayle
 Be ay of chere as lyght as leef on lynde
 And let him care and wepe and wringe and wayle. 1156
Here endeth the Clerkes tale.

3. Link, as follows:

Here beginneth the [] prolog.

THIS worthy clerk whan ended was his tale
 Oure Hoste seyde and swor by Goddes bones
 Me were levere than a barel ale
 My wyf at hom had herd this legende ones
 This is a gentil tale for the nones
 As to my purpos woste 3e my wille
 But thing that wil not be let it be stille. 7

* * * * *

FRAGMENT V.

1. Link.—2. The MERCHAUNT'S Tale of January and May.—3. Link.

THIS Fragment is found in several conditions in the various manuscripts. The tale is either found without any link at beginning or end, or with or without the link at the end, or with or without the link at the beginning.

As far as the tale itself bears evidence of its intended position lines 439—441 shew that it was meant to be subsequent to Fragment III. which contains the Wife of Bath's tale. In the next stage the link at the end was written, unmistakeably with the view of introducing Fragment VI. Where, however, the Squyeres tale had already found a place following Fragment II., this connexion was lost sight of, and by altering the name in line 23 of the link, and omitting the words 'of love' in line 24, it was readily used to introduce Fragment VII. instead. This is the case in a large number of copies. In a further stage of the composition Chaucer added a link at the beginning which served to join this Fragment immediately to Fragment IV. In copies where this introductory link is found, the link at the end will generally be found unaltered; where it is not inserted, this Fragment is usually found after the next one, the concluding link being there altered to suit the occasion.

1. Prologue, as follows:

Here beginneth the Merchauntes prolog.

WEPING and wayling care and other sorwe
Y knowe inough on even and on morwe
Quod the merchaunt and so don othere mo
That wedded ben y trowe that it be so

For wel y wot it fareth so with me
 Y have a wyf the worste that may be
 For though the feend to hire icoupled were
 She wolde him overmacche y dar wel swere 8
 What shulde y 3ow reherse in special
 Hire hy malyce she is a shrewe at al
 There is a longe and large difference
 Betwixe Grisildis grete pacience
 And of my wyf the passinge crueltee
 Were y unbounden al so mote y thee
 Y wolde nevere eft comen in the snare.
 We wedded men liven in sorwe and care 16
 Assaye it who so wil and he shal fynde
 That y seye sooth by seynt Thomas of Ynde
 As for the more part y seye not alle
 God shilde that it shulde so befall
 A good sire Hoste y have iwedded be
 Thes monethes two and more not pardee
 And 3it y trowe that he that al his lyve
 Wyfles hath ben though that men wolde him ryve 24
 Unto the herte ne couthe in no manere
 Telle so moche sorwe as y now here
 Couthe tellen of my wyves cursednesse.
 Now quod oure Hoste Merchaunt so God 3ow blesse
 Sin 3e so moche knowen of that art
 Ful hertely telleth us a part.
 Gladly quod he but of myn owene sore
 For sory herte y telle may no more. 32

Here endeth the Merchauntes prolog.

2. The Merchaunt, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Merchauntes tale.

WHYLOM there was dwellinge in Lombardye

lines 439—441:

The wyf of Bathe if 3e han understonde
 Of mariage which 3e now han in honde
 Declared hath ful wel in litel space

ending (line 1174) :

God blesse us and his moder seynte Marie.

Here endeth the Merchauntes tale.

3. Link, as follows :

Here beginneth the [] prolog.

Ey Goddes mercy seyde oure Hoste tho
 Now swich a wyf y preye God kepe me fro
 Lo swiche sleyghtes and subtilitees
 In wemen ben for ay as besy as bees
 Ben they us sely men for to deceyve
 And from a sooth evere wole they weyve
 By this merchauntes tale it proveth wel
 But douteles as trewe as eny stel 8
 Y have a wyf though that she poore be
 But of hire tonge a labbinge shrewe is she
 And ȝit she hath an heap of vyces mo
 Therof no fors let alle swiche thing go
 But wite ȝe what, in counseyl be it seyde
 Me reweth sore y am unto hire teyd
 For and y shulde rekene every vyce
 Which that she hath iwys y were too nyce 16
 And cause why it shulde reported be
 And told to hire of som of this meynne
 Of whom it nedeth not for to declare
 Sin wemen connen oute swich chaffare
 And ek my wit suffyseth not therto
 To tellen al therfore my tale is do.
 [] come forth if that ȝoure wille be
 And seye a tale [] for certes ȝe 24
 Conne theron as moche as eny man
 Nay sire quod he but swich thing as y can
 With herty wille for y wil not rebelle
 Aȝeyn ȝoure lust a tale wil y telle
 Have me excused if that y speke amis
 My wille is good and lo my tale is this. 30

Here endeth the [] prolog.

FRAGMENT VI.

- * * * 1. The SQUYERES Tale of the Horse of brass (unfinished) * * *.—
2. Link.

THIS Fragment occurs in two states. The tale (of which no known MSS. give more than the first couplet of Part 3) is found either with or without the link at the end. The link must have been added at a later stage of the composition, as it is wanting in many copies, and where it does occur, it is found in two states. It was evidently written to connect Fragments VI. and VII. together; and in this state it has the word 'Frankeleyn' in lines 24 and 27. In the other state, the name is altered in line 24, and line 27 is made to end 'Quod the Merchaunt certeyn,' and Fragment V. is made to follow immediately. This link has been unfortunately omitted altogether by the latest editor. In the MS. which he follows (Harl. 7334) there is a gap of a whole quire, extending from some way before the end of the Squyeres Tale to far into that of the Frankeleyn, but it is perfectly clear both from a calculation of matter required to fill the missing leaves and also from observation of the family of text which the MS. represents, that the link must have been in the MS. before it was defective. It might easily have been supplied from another good MS. of the same family. MS. Lansdowne 851, from which the rest of the gap has been supplied, does not belong to the same family.

* * * * *

1. **The Squyere**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Squyeres tale.

AT Sarray in the londe of Tartarye

lines 64, 65 :

There nis no man that may reporten al
Y wil not tarien 3ow for it is pryme.

lines 338, 339 :

Til that wel nygh the day began to springe.

Pars secunda.

THE norice of digestioun the sleep

lines 662—664 :

And there y lafte y wil a3eyn beginne.

Pars tercia.

APOLLO whirleth up his char so hye
Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye

* * * * *

Here endeth the Squyeres tale.

2. **Link**, as follows :

Here beginneth the [] prolog.

IN feyth Squyere thou hast thee wel iquit
And gentilly y preyse wel thy wit
Quod the [] consideringe thy 3owthe
So felingly thou spekest sire y alowe thee
As to my doom there is non that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere
If that thou live. God 3ive the good chaunce
And in vertu sende thee continuaunce
For of thy speking y have gret deyntee
Y have a sone and by the Trinitee
It were me levere than twenty pound worth londe
Though it ryght now were fallen in my honde

8

He were a man of swich discrecioun
 As that 3e be. fy on possessioun
 But if a man be vertuous withal
 Y have my sone snibbed and 3it shal 16
 For he to vertu lesteth not to entende
 But for to playe at dys and to dispende
 And lose al that he hath is his usage
 And he had levere talke with a page
 Than to commune with eny gentil wyght
 There he myghte lere gentillesse aryght.

- Straw for 3oure gentillesse quod oure Hoste
 What [] pardee sire wel thou wost 24
 That eche of 3ow mot tellen at the leste
 A tale or two or breken his beheste.
 That knowe y wel quod the []
 Y preye 3ow have me not in disdeyn
 Though y to this man speke a word or two.
 Telle on thy tale with outen wordes mo.
 Gladly sire Hoste quod he y wil obeye
 Unto 3oure wille now herkeneth what y seye 32
 Y wil 3ow not contrarie in no wyse
 As fer as that my wittes may suffyse
 Y preye to God that it may plesen 3ow
 That wot y wel that it is good inow. 36

Here endeth the [] prolog.

FRAGMENT VII.

* * * 1. The FRANKLEYN'S Tale of Dorigen. * * *

THIS Fragment consists of nothing but the Frankeleyn's tale, and is often found quite apart from either Fragments VI. or V. Consequently lines 1—56 are in many MSS. marked off (by the introduction to the tale), and treated as the Frankeleynes Prologue. The same thing happens with lines 1—34 of the Knyght, Stanzas 1—5 of the Man of Lawe, Stanzas 1—5 of the Prioress, and Stanzas 1—12 of the Second Nonnes tale.

* * * * *

1. The Frankeleyn, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Frankeleynes tale.

THES olde gentil Britouns in here dayes

lines 56—58:

But if ȝow leste my tale shule ȝe here.

IN Armoryke that called is Breteyne

Ther was a knyght that lovede and dide his peyne

ending (line 908):

Y can no more my tale is at an ende.

Here endeth the Frankeleynes tale.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT VIII.

* * * 1. The NONNES Tale of the life of Seynte Cecilie.—2. The
CHANOUN'S ȝEMAN, with his Tale of the London Annuelere. * * *

THIS Fragment in one set of MSS. is found where it stands here, and in another set between Fragments X. and XI. It was evidently as an afterthought that these pieces were put together and made to form part of the Canterbury Tales. There can be little doubt that the Nonne's Tale is the 'Lyf of seynte Cecilie' mentioned in the Prologue to the Legende, an earlier poem of Chaucer's, which he has here introduced and given to one of his characters without even taking the trouble to alter the words of the proem in which the poet speaks in his own character. In the episode of the Chanon's ȝeman I have numbered the lines throughout, because there is no clear distinction between the introductory matter and the tale. Indeed the tale is of a different nature from the general run of the Canterbury Tales, which are for the most part simply borrowed stories translated and versified. There is some resemblance to this mode of treatment in Fragment III. with the Wyf's long prologue, and the interruptions of the Frere and Somnour after the tales have begun; and again in Fragment IX., where the actual tale told of the three rioters forms but a small portion of the episode of the Pardonere. Where this Fragment is found placed between Fragments X. and XI. I have very little doubt that this transposition is the

result of that editorial care which has rearranged the Monk's tale, &c. from a feeling that the mention of Boughton under Blee must of necessity throw this Fragment to a much later place in the Collection. But it has been before shewn how impossible it is so to arrange the several Fragments that the order of time shall be preserved throughout.

* * * * *

1. The Seconde Nonne, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Seconde Nonnes [].

THE ministre and the norice unto vyces

line 62 :

And though that y unworthy sone of Eve

lines 84, 85 :

And preye 3ow that 3e wole my werke amende.

FIRST wil y 3ow the name of seynte Cecilie

ending (line 553):

Men don to Cryst and to his seyntes servyse.

Here endeth the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

2. The Chanounes 3eman, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Chanounes 3emannes prolog.

WHAN ended was the lyf of seynte Cecyle

Er we had ridden fully fyve myle

At Boughton under Blee us gan atake

A man that clothed was in clothes blake

And underneth he werede a ~~why~~ surplis

His hakeney which that was al pomelee gris

So swatte that it wonder was to see

It semede as he had prikked myles three.

lines 29—36:

And whan that he was come he gan to crye

God save quod he this joly compaynye

Fasté have y prikked quod he for ȝoure sake
 Because that y wolde ȝow atake
 To ryden in this merie compaynye.
 His ȝeman was ek ful of curteysye
 And seyde Sires now in the morwe tyde
 Oute of ȝoure hostelrye y sey ȝow ryde.

lines 70, 71:

That al the ground on which we ben rydinge
 Til that we come to Canterburie toun

lines 166, 167:

Swich thing as that y knowe y wil declare.
 WITH this Chanoun y dwelt have sevene ȝere

lines 458, 459:

But in this cas herkeneth what y seye.
 IN London was a prest an annuelere

ending (line 928):

God sende every trewe man boote of his bale.

*Here endeth the tale of the Chanounes ȝeman*¹.

* * * * *

¹ In the manuscripts of Class I. followed in the old printed editions, the following link is here inserted to introduce the Doctour of phisyk, but there can be very little doubt that it is spurious. Occasionally only the last three couplets are found, from which circumstance Tyrwhitt has given them in his text. They are given in the hope that some result may be obtained from collation:

Here beginneth the Doctours prolog.

WHAN this ȝeman his tale ended hadde
 Of this fals chanoun which was so badde
 Oure hoste gan seye trewely and certeyn
 This prest was begyled soth for to seyn
 He weninge for to be a philosopher
 Til he ryght no gold lefte in his cofer
 And sothly this prest hadde a lither jape
 This cursed chanoun putte in his hood an ape

But al this passe y over as now.	
Sire doctour of phisyk 3it y preye 3ow	10
Telle us a tale of som honest matere.	
It shal be don if that 3e wole it here	
Seyde this doctour and his tale began anon	
Now goode men quod he herkeneth everich on.	14

Here endeth the Doctours prolog.

FRAGMENT IX.

- * * * 1. The DOCTOUR OF PHISYK'S Tale of Appius and Virginia.—
 2. The PARDONERE, with his Tale of Death and the three rioters.
 * * *

THERE is nothing whatever in this Fragment from which we can gain any clue to its intended position in the work.

I have numbered the lines in the Episode of the Pardonere throughout, because the manuscripts vary in the point at which the prologue ends, and at the end the Pardonere goes off into talk which forms no part of the Tale. The Tale might be considered to end with line 608 before the line

O cursed sinne ful of cursednesse,

but I am not aware of any authority in the manuscripts for making a division at this point.

* * * * *

1. The Doctour of Phisyk, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Doctours tale.

THERE was as telleth Titus Livius
 ending (line 286):

Forsaketh sinne er sinne 3ow forsake.

Here endeth the Doctours tale.

2. The Pardonere, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Pardoneres prolog.

OURE Hoste gan swere as he were wood

lines 42, 43 :

Upon some honest thing whyl that y drinke.

LORDINGES quod he in chirche whan y preche

lines 176, 177 :

Now holde 3oure pes my tale y wil beginne.

IN Flandres whylom was a compaynye

ending (line 682) :

Anon they kisse and ryden forth here weye.

Here endeth the Pardoneres tale¹.

* * * * *

¹ In some of the MSS. and in the old printed editions, the following six couplets are added as a link to introduce Fragment X, but they are unquestionably spurious :

Now frendes seyde oure hoste so dere
 How lyketh 3ow by Johan the pardonere
 He hath unboked weel the male
 He hath us told ryght a thrifty tale
 As touching of his misgovernaunce
 Y preye to God 3ive him good chaunce
 As 3e han herd of thes ryotoures three
 Now gentil marinere hertely y preye thee
 Telle us a good tale and that ryght anon
 It shal be don by God and by seynt Johan
 Seyde this Marinere as weel as evere y can
 And ryght anon his tale he thus began.

FRAGMENT X.

- * * * 1. The SHIPMAN's Tale of the Merchaunt of Seynt Denys.—
 2. Link.—3. The PRIORESSES Tale of Alma Redemptoris.—4. Link.—
 5. CHAUCER's Tale of SIR THOPACE.—6. Link.—7. CHAUCER's Tale
 of MELIBEE.—8. Link.—9. The MONK's Tale of the fall of princes.—
 10. Link.—11. The NONNES PRIEST's Tale of Chaunteclere and Pertelote.
 —12. Link. * * *

THERE are two points in this Fragment, in which the variations occur.

After the tale of the Nonnes Prest is a link which introduces nothing, and in many manuscripts it is accordingly suppressed, as in the case of the link at the end of Fragment II. In some copies where Fragment VIII. is made to follow, the blank in the last line is clumsily filled up by the words 'the Nonne,' and the following three couplets are added:

Madame and y durste y wolde 3ow preye
 To telle a tale in furthering of oure weye
 Than myghte 3e do unto us gret ese
 Gladly sire quod she so that y myghte plesse
 3ow and this worthy compaynye
 And began here tale ryght thus ful soberly.

The rhymes of last couplet would be alone sufficient to condemn it as spurious, if such evidence were needed.

In the Monk's t:	stances of Peter of Spain,
Peter of Cypr	and Ugolino are found
either betw	it the end after Cresus.

As the variation cannot have been caused by any accidental transposition, the circumstance of finding them at the end in one set of MSS. would seem to shew that it was the result of the same editorial care which cancelled the needless links, on which subject so much has been said already; while if we consider that the instance of Cresus as originally written stood at the end, then the allusion to the concluding stanza in the words of the Hoste immediately following are perfectly natural and easy to understand.

The present Fragment is far the best specimen of the extent of variety which Chaucer gives to the composition and construction of his great work. Starting with the 'riding rhyme' of the Shipman's *tale* of the Merchaunt of St Denys, it changes first to the 7-line stanzas of the Prioresses *Legend* of the boy martyr, thence to the vulgar *Romance* stanzas of Sire Thopace, thence to the serious prose '*morality*' of Melibee, thence to the heavier 8-line stanzas of the Monk's '*tragedies*,' and finally returns to the riding rhyme in the Nun's Priest's *fable* of Chaunteclere and Pertelote.

* * * * *

1. The Shipman, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Shipmannes tale.

A MERCHAUNT whylom dwelte at seynt Denys
ending (line 434):

Taling inough unto oure lyves ende.

Here endeth the Shipmannes tale.

2. Link, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Prioresses prolog.

WEL seyde by corpus bones quod oure Hoste
ending (line 18):

Gladly quod she and seyde in this manere.

Here endeth the Prioresses prolog.

3. The Prioress, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Prioresses tale.

O LORD oure lord thy name how mervaylous
lines 35, 36:

Gydeth my song that y shal of ȝou seye.

THERE was in Asie in a gret citee

ending (line 245):

For reverence of his moder Marye.

Here endeth the Prioresses tale.

4. Link, beginning (line 1):

*Here beginneth the prolog of Chauceres Rym of Sire
Thopace.*

WHAN seyde was al this miracle every man
ending (line 21):

Som deynte thing me thinketh by his chere.

*Here endeth the prolog of Chauceres Rym of Sire
Thopace.*

5. Sire Thopace, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth Chauceres Rym of Sire Thopace.

LISTETH lordinges in good entent
ending (line 209):

Til on a day—

Here endeth Chauceres Rym of Sire Thopace.

6. Link, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the prolog of Chauceres tale of Melibee.

No more of this for Goddes dignitee
ending (line 48):

And let me tellen al my tale y preye.

Here endeth the prolog of Chauceres tale of Melibee.

7. Melibee, beginning :

Here beginneth Chauceres tale of Melibee.

A ȝONG man called Melibeus mighty and riche begat
upon his wyf...

ending :

...oure giltes and bringe us to the blisse that nevere hath
ende. Amen.

Here endeth Chauceres tale of Melibee.

8. Link, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Monkes prolog.

WHAN ended was my tale of Melibee
line 38 :

Lo Rochester stondeth here faste by

ending (line 102) :

Have me excused of myne ignoraunce.

Here endeth the Monkes prolog.

9. The Monk, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Monkes tale.

Y WIL bewayle in manere of tragedie
line 9 :

LUCIFER.

AT Lucifer though he an angel were
line 17 :

ADAM.

LO Adam in the felde of Damascene
line 25 :

SAMPSOUN.

LO Sampsoun which that was annunciat
line 105 :

HERCULES.

OF Hercules the sovereyn conquerour

line 153 :

NABUCHODONOSOR.

THE myghty tron the precious tresor

line 193 :

BALTHASAR.

HIS sone which that hyghte Balthasar

line 257 :

ZENOBIA.

ZENOBIA of Palmire the quene

line 385 :

PETRO OF SPAYNE.

O NOBLE o worthy Petro glorie of Spayne

line 401 :

PETRO KING OF CYPRE.

O WORTHY Petro king of Cypre also

line 409 :

BERNABO VISCOUNTE.

OF Milayn grete Bernabo Viscounte

line 417 :

HUGELIN OF PYSE.

OF the erl Hugelin of Pyse the langour

lines 472, 473 :

From poynt to poynt not o word wil he fayle.

NERO.

AL though that Nero were as vicious

line 561 :

HOLOFERNES.

WAS nevere capitayne under a king

line 585 :

ANTIOCHUS.

WHAT nedeth it of king Antiochus

line 641 :

ALEXANDER.

THE storie of Alexandre is so comune

line 681 :

JULIUS CESAR.

BY wisdom manhood and by gret labour

line 737 :

CRESUS.

THE riche Cresus whylom king of Lyde

ending line 776 :

And covere hire bryghte face with a cloude.

Here endeth the Monkes tale.

10. **Link**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Nonnes Prestes prolog.

HO quod the knyght good sire no more of this

ending (line 54) :

This swete prest this goodly man sire Johan.

Here endeth the Nonnes Prestes prolog.

11. **The Nonnes Prest**, beginning (line 1) :

Here beginneth the Nonnes Prestes tale.

A POORE widwe somdel stope in age

ending (line 626) :

And bringe us alle unto his blisse. Amen.

Here endeth the Nonnes Prestes tale.

12. **Link**, as follows

Here beginneth the wordes of the Hoste.

SIRE Nonnes Prest oure Hoste seyde anon

Iblessed be thy brech and every ston

This was a merie tale of Chaunteclere

But by my trewthe if thou were seculere

Thou woldest ben a tredefowl aryght
 For if thou have corage as thou hast myght
 Thee were nede of hennes as y wene
 3e mo than sevene tymes seventene 8
 See whiche brawnes hath this gentil prest
 So gret a nekke and swich a large brest
 He looketh as a sparhawk with his yen
 Him nedeth not his colour for to dyen
 With Brasil ne with greyn of Portingale
 But sire fayre falle 3ow for 3oure tale.
 And after that he with ful merie chere
 Seyde to [] as 3e shule here. 16

* * * * *

FRAGMENT XI.

* * * 1. Prologue.—2. The MAUNCIPLES Tale of Phebus and the Crow. * * *

THIS Fragment is devoid of any allusion by which it can be connected with any other, and is accordingly found variously placed in different copies, though in most MSS. the argument from the locality, the 'litel toun which that icleped is Bob-up-and-down under the Blee in Canterburie weye', has been sufficient to force it into a very late place in the collection.

* * * * *

1. Prologue, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Maunciples prolog.

WITE 3e not where ther stant a litel toun
Which that icleped is Bob up and doun
Under the Blee in Canterburie weye
There gan oure Hoste to jopen and to pleye

lines 15—19;

Awake thou cook quod he God 3ive thee sorwe
What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe
Hast thou had fleen al nyght or art thou dronke
Or hast thou with som quene al nyght iswonke
So that thou myght not holden up thyn hed

ending (line 104):

Wel sire quod he now herkeneth what y seye.

Here endeth the Maunciples prolog.

2. The Maunciple, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Maunciples tale.

WHAN Phebus dwelte here in this erthe adoun

ending (line 258):

Kepe wel thy tonge and thinke upon the crowe.

Here endeth the Maunciples tale.

* * * * *

FRAGMENT XII.

- * * * 1. Link.—2. The PERSON'S Tale of very penance, with the conclusion of the whole work.

THERE is no doubt of the position of the present Fragment at the end of the whole work; but there is nothing in the prologue which alludes to any tale in particular, and though Fragment XI. precedes in most copies, yet variations are found in some of the MSS. In the edition of 1542 the so-called Ploughman's tale was first printed among the Canterbury Tales—for though printed a few years before in the same size and by the same printer as the previous edition of 1532, it seems to have been purposely excluded. Even in 1542 however it merely formed an Appendix to the tales, and followed Fragment XII. But in the next edition (without date but about 1550) and in all the subsequent editions before Tyrwhitt's time (1561, 1598, 1602, 1687, 1721) it appears foisted in between Fragments XI. and XII. and the first line of Fragment XII. has the blank filled in with the word Ploughman.

* * * * *

1. Link, beginning (line 1):

Here beginneth the Persones prolog.

By that the [] had his tale iended
The sonne fro the south lyne was descended
So lowe that it was not to my syghte
Degrees nyne and twenty as of hyghte
Four of the klok it was tho as y gesse
For eleven foot a litel more or lesse

My shadwe was at thilke tyme as there
 Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
 In six feet equal of proporcioun.
 Therwith the moones exaltacioun
 In mene Libra alwey gan ascende
 As we were entringe at the thorpes ende
 For which oure Hoste as he was wont to gye
 As in this cas oure joly compaynye
 Seyde in this wyse Lordinges everich on
 Now lakketh us no tales mo than on
 Fulfild is my sentence and my decree
 Y trowe that we han herd of ech degree.
 Almost fulfilled is myn ordinaunce

lines 46, 47 :

Y wil 3ow telle a litel tale in prose
 To knitte up al this feste and make an ende

ending (lines 71—74) :

Telleth quod he your meditacioun
 But hasteth 3ow the sonne wil adoun
 Beth fructuous and that in litel space
 And to do wel God sende 3ow his grace.

Here endeth the Persones prolog.

2. The Person, beginning :

Here beginneth the Persones tale.

JERE. vj°. STATE super vias et videte et interrogate de
 semitis antiquis que sit via bona et ambulate in ea et inve-
 nietis refrigerium animabus vestris.

OURE swete lord God of hevene that no man wil perishe
 but wil that we comen alle...

ending :

...and the lyf by deth and mortificacioun of sinne to
 which lyf he us bringe that boughte us with his precious
 blood. Amen.

Here endeth the Persones tale.

Here taketh the makere of this book his leve.

Now preye y to hem alle that herken this litel tretis or rede it that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem that therof they thanke oure lord Jhesu Cryst of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse and if ther be any thing that displeseth hem y preye hem also that they arette it to the defaut of myn unconninge and not to my wille that wolde fayn have seyde better if y hadde had conninge for oure book seyth Al that is write is write for oure doctryne and that is myn entente. Wherefore y beseke 3ow mekely for the mercy of God that 3e preye for me that Cryst have mercy of me and for3ive me myne giltes and namely of myne translaciouns and endytinges of worldly vanitees the which y revoke in my retracciouns as the book of Troilus the book also of Fame the book of the fyve and twenty ladies the book of the Duchesse the book of Seynt Valentynes day of the Parlement of briddes the Tales of Canterburie thilke that sounen unto sinne the book of the Leoun and many another book if they were in my remembrance and many a song and many a lecherous lay Cryst of his grete mercy for3ive me the sinne. But of the translacioun of Boece of Consolacioun and othere bookes of legendes of seyntes and of omelies and moralitee and devocioun that thanke y oure lord Jhesu Cryst and his blisful moder and alle the seyntes in hevene besekinge hem that they fro hensforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to bewayle myne giltes and to stodie to the savacioun of my soule and graunte me grace of veray penaunce confessioun and satisfaccioun to don in this present lyf through the benygne grace of him that is king of kinges and prest of alle prestes that boughte us with the precious blode of his herte so that y mot ben on of hem at the laste day of doom that shule be saved qui cum deo patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat deus per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

NOTE.

UNTIL a day or two ago, when the preceding sheets were brought to me from the University Press, I was fully under the impression that they had been cancelled and the type distributed early in 1868. I came to the conclusion that the remarks were too crude even for such a temporary publication as I then contemplated, and I accordingly had a few copies struck off containing nothing but the beginnings and ends of the several Fragments and their component parts. These I thought might perhaps be useful to any person who had opportunities of access to manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales.

Four years have witnessed a considerable advance in the study of Chaucer both in this country and elsewhere ; and Mr Furnivall's labours during that period have put far out of date any work that I have ever done upon this subject. Nevertheless, as the sheets are still standing in type, and they represent a certain amount of thought and labour and the views which I held at that time (since, of course, very much modified), I have thought it worth while to have a few copies struck off, rather as a memorial of past work than as an earnest of what is to come. Every day seems to render it less likely that I shall ever put my hand again to any work of the kind.

H. B.

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